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Report on the 1994 IFLA Conference Held in Havana, Cuba

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REPORT ON THE 1994 IFLA CONFERENCE HELD IN HAVANA, CUBA By Nancy Anderson

Writing this year as Chair of IFLA's Sci-Tech Section, rather than Secretary, I have a different viewpoint. One difference is my overall view of attendance. Only five of the twelve committee members attended the conference in Havana, the lowest attendance in many years. Of the two SLA delegates, only Nancy Anderson attended.

As always, the Section focused the greater part of the discussion on its upcoming conference programs: Istanbul (1995):

The theme chosen for the open session is "The Players in the Archiving of Electronic Journals," which is an offshoot of the Guest Lecture Series, "The Future of the Scientific Journal," which we are also helping to plan. Patricia Yocum, the other SLA delegate, is program planner. Also, a workshop with IATUL will be explored.

For the conference at Beijing (1996), the theme chosen for the open session is "Networking and Documentation of Electronic Journals." Co-sponsorship will be sought with the Section on Document Delivery and Interlending. The workshop theme is "Grey Literature." Andrei Zemskov (principal investigator of the Section's project on

Grey Literature) will organize and moderate the workshop.

OPEN SESSION

The Havana Conference was held August 20-27, 1994. This year the open session program was not scheduled for simultaneous interpretation. This resulted in the lowest attendance (30-35 persons) in recent memory as only those librarians who could understand English came to the session—all papers were given in English. Spanish translations were not available at the time of the session even though they were to have been provided. In order to compensate, the local contact person, America Santos, and her translator prepared a Spanish summary of each paper's abstract for the benefit of the Latin Americans in the audience. The theme chosen for the open session was "Social Barriers to Access of Sci-Tech Information." One of the papers resulted from a call for papers posted on the Internet, while the other two came from personal contacts. Jagdish Aggrawal was unable to receive approval to attend the conference from the Saudi government, so Martin Kesselman read his paper.

Barbara Ford was viewed on CNN several days before her presentation as she waited to board her charter flight from Miami. Barbara's general talk on information literacy opened the session. It was of interest to a variety of librarians as the creation of a core program on literacy is gaining momentum within IFLA. Her paper was followed by papers from Agrawal and Lau which addressed the problem and solutions by non-English-speakers to the dominance of English as the language of choice for sci-tech literature.

"Information Literacy as a Barrier"
by Barbara J. Ford, Director of
University Library Services, Virginia
Commonwealth University, Richmond,
Virginia, USA.

Abstract: Today most of us have too much information. Computer tools help us manage information but also bring us more information. The changes in formats and organization of information mean that users need guidance. Information literacy is a concept that had emerged to describe the task ahead. The paper provides background on the concept of information literacy and discusses information literacy activities worldwide with emphasis on science and technology. This paper is available in English, French, and Spanish.

"Linguistic Obstructions to Scientific Information in High Technology Areas"
by Jagdish C. Agrawal and Saud
Al-Mathami, College of Computer &
Information Science, King Saud
University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Abstract: The rapidly advancing high technology area of computer science is dependent on language dependent tools and techniques. The literature for these

tools and techniques is overwhelmingly concentrated in English. Well-recognized bodies that make these standards and techniques (ANSI, ISO, etc.) are heavily influenced by English. Third World countries that import these tools and technology face a large problem of technology transfer: training. In Third World countries, where English is not the first language, the methods to filter and control the potentially unlimited flux of information must include methods to deal with the language issue. Universities like ours are, through their faculty research and development, contributing heavily towards developing the methods to deal with the language issue. Our Computer Science degree programs have an active track of Arabization. Our student projects in overwhelming numbers concentrate on Arabization. At the R&D level, our faculty colleagues actively pursue research in Arabization. Private industry is also contributing to this effort by offering tools and techniques (Arabic Windows, WYSIWYG word processors, spread sheets, data management systems, etc.). There is also an effort for developing standards for this Arabization. However, the solutions that we share with the readers of this paper are localized solutions at the national level and do raise issues of portability, interoperability, etc. across national boundaries. There is a need to have "multilingual" tools and techniques as well as standards for a better solution, and the Third World countries ought to collectively look at them. These needs are also discussed in the following paper. This paper is available in English and French.

"Scientific Information Can Be an Under-Used Commodity: The Mexican Case" by Jesus Lau, Senior Researcher, ITESM, Campus Toluca, Toluca, Mexico.

Abstract: Scientific and technical information (S&T) is a must for the development of any country. However, S&T information is not an easy product to digest for countries which lack scientific development. The main limitations are social barriers, such as the lack of a research culture, poor reading habits, a low level of education and a poor information dissemination infrastructure. These factors inhibit S&T information use more than the economic ones in middle income countries. This paper discussed the social barriers that limit S&T information use in Mexico. Among such barriers are: nationalism, oral culture, and the non-research oriented educational system. This paper is available in English.

WORKSHOP

The Section co-sponsored, with the UDT Core Programme, Section on Information Technology, and Section of Social Science Libraries, an all-day workshop on "Telecommunication Options for the 90s". The morning session concentrated on Internet basics. Leigh Swain and Paula Tallinn, both from the UDT Core Programme, provided an excellent overview. Marcos Silva talked about Internet protocols (FTP, SMTP, remote login) and Steve Cisler gave an excellent presentation on navigation tools (Gopher, Wais, Archie, WWW, Mosaic). In the afternoon various speakers presented papers on communication options. One of the

speakers, talked about the Section's project on satellite-based communications (INMARSAT).

PROJECT REPORTS

Publication/Project/Brochure

Project SCIE 1-88:

"World Survey of Availability of Theses in Science and Technology."

Dennis Shaw will give the electronic file to IFLA for putting it up on an IFLA gopher. Announcement of its availability will be made in IATUL Newletter, *IFLA Journal*, and various sci-tech listservers.

Project SCIE 2-92:

"Feasibility Study of the Use of Satellite Communication Channels for Electronic Data Transfer"

Dennis F. Shaw, a member of the Standing Committee is pursuing this project. David Price described the project at the workshop (see below). The final report will be distributed widely. An INSPEL article is being considered.

Project SCIE 3-94:

"Electronic Deposition of Full-Text Grey Literature Documents."

In 1993 SC and Special Libraries CB approved for funding a proposal from Andrei Zemskov to create an electronic depository of full-text grey literature. Winston Roberts approved disbursal of 900 NLG for 1994. A review committee was named to comment and assist in preparation of a more detailed proposal and workplan. In 1994 SC assisted in preparation of questionnaires and agreed that the final report would be published in a library journal as well as serve as the focus for 1996 workshop.

New Project:

"Survey of the Content and Structure of the Information of WWW/Gopher Services of the IATUL and IFLA Section of Science and Technology Libraries"

SC approved this for funding with recently released PB 1994 funds, a proposal directed by Sinikka Koskiala. The initial phase will be reported on in Istanbul. The second phase of the study will be carried out in 1995, focusing on in-depth analysis of the content and

structure of the data. An informational brochure has been revised. English-, Russian- and Spanish-language versions were distributed in Havana. A French-language version will be prepared during the coming year with a Chinese-language version being explored.

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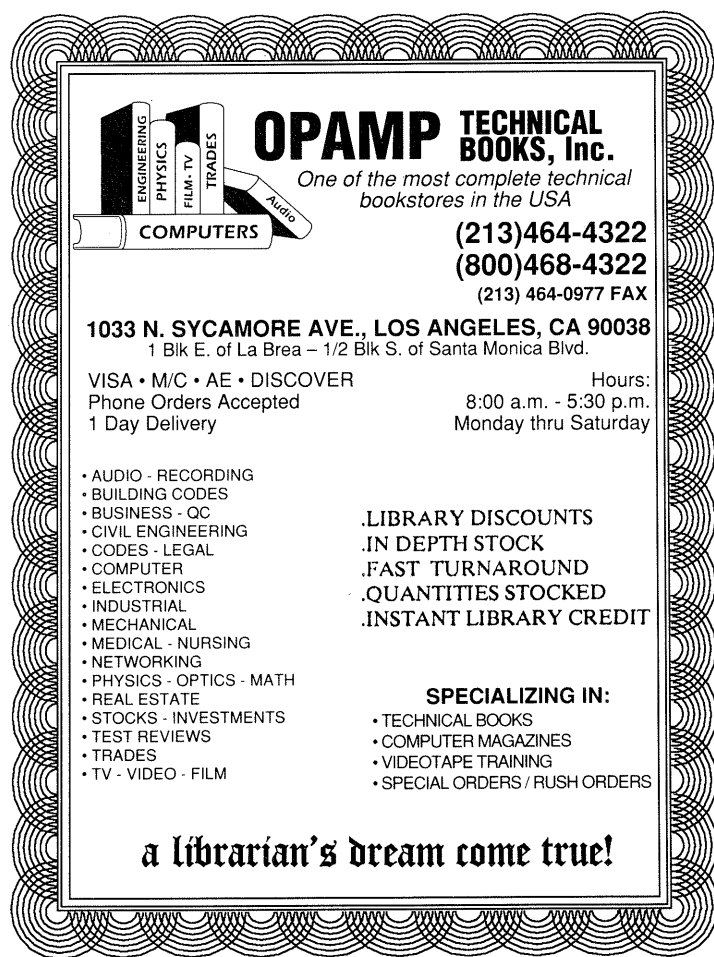
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